

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0067

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: SOVIET REP'S REMARKS ON EASTERN PROPOSAL
TO DISBAND WITHDRAWN FOREIGN UNITS

REF: BONN 02947 (DTG 201724Z FEB 76) (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ON FEBRUARY 20, SOVIET DELOFF AND
INTERPRETER (KOVALEV) EXPLAINED TO US DELOFF MEANING OF
TERM DISBAND (RASFORMIROVYVATSYA) AS FOLLOWS. UNITS
WOULD BE WITHDRAWN TO THE USSR OR USA WHERE THEY WOULD BE
ELIMINATED FROM THE ORDER OF BATTLE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A
COUNTRY HAD FIFTEEN ARMIES AND DISBANDED ONE OF THEM,
IT WOULD THEN HAVE FOURTEEN ARMIES. HE SAID THE WORD
CARRIED NO CONNOTATION AS TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN SUBSEQUENTLY

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TO PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT OF DISBANDED UNITS. IN DIS-

CUSSION WITH FRG DEPREP AND US DEPREP ON FEBRUARY 20, SOVIET REP KHLESTOV DISCUSSED THE EASTERN SUGGESTION, CONTAINED IN THE NEW EASTERN REDUCTION PROPOSAL OF FEBRUARY 17, THAT WITHDRAWN STATIONED OR FOREIGN UNITS BE DISBANDED. ON THE BASIS OF THESE INITIAL SOVIET COMMENTS, IT APPEARED THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY REAL LIMITATION ON THE NUMBER OF UNITS OR MEN AND THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN MADE MAINLY FOR EFFECT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM FRG DEPREP, KHLESTOV MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE EASTERN PROPOSAL THAT US AND SOVIET UNITS WITHDRAWN TO THEIR HOMELANDS BE DISBANDED:

A. THE WITHDRAWN UNITS WOULD REALLY BE DISBANDED, NAMELY DISSOLVED. SUBSTITUTE UNITS OF THE SAME TYPE WOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED.

B. THE WEST NOW HAS "SUFFICIENT MEANS" TO ASSURE ITSELF THAT DISBANDMENT HAD ACTUALLY TAKEN PLACE.

C. KHLESTOV AVOIDED A DIRECT ANSWER AS TO WHETHER THE EAST CONTEMPLATED A SPECIFIC LIMITATION ON UNITS OF THE TYPE WITHDRAWN.

D. KHLESTOV INDICATED THAT GOVERNMENTS WOULD DECIDE ON THEIR OWN WHAT WAS THE BEST USE OF THE MEN INVOLVED.

E. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER A TREATY LIMIT ON WITHDRAWN UNITS WAS INTENDED, KHLESTOV LABELLED THE DISBANDMENT MEASURE AS "PSYCHOLOGICAL" AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING IN CHARACTER.

F. KHLESTOV IMPLIED IT WOULD BROADEN THE SCOPE OF A REDUCTION AGREEMENT BEYOND THE AGREED AREA OF REDUCTIONS TO INCLUDE IN IT CONTROL PROVISIONS WHICH WOULD BE APPLICABLE OUTSIDE THE AREA.

G. HE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT CON-
TEMPLATE A LIMITATION ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF THEIR AIR
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AND GROUND MANPOWER.

H. HE SAID THIS LATTER SUBJECT BELONGED TO A DIFFERENT TOPIC, THAT OF GENERAL DISARMAMENT, AND TO A DIFFERENT FORUM. THE SOVIETS HAD ALREADY MADE PROPOSALS ON GENERAL DISARMAMENT COVERING REDUCTION OF HOME ARMIES, BUT THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA HAD REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE ON THIS SUBJECT.

I. IN ANY CASE, THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT REDUCE ITS FORCES TO THE SAME LEVEL AS THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE IT HAD SPECIAL DEFENSE NEEDS OF ITS OWN.

J. IT WAS CLEAR THAT, FOR THEIR PART, CANADA AND THE UK WOULD NOT WANT A LIMIT ON THE TOTAL SIZE OF THEIR FORCES.

K. IN ANY EVENT, WESTERN LEADERS, MOST RECENTLY DEFENSE SECRETARY RUMSFELD, HAD CONFIRMED THAT NATO HAD MORE MANPOWER THAN THE WARSAW PACT.

L. IF PARTICIPANTS REALLY WANTED TO TALK ABOUT EQUAL MANPOWER, THEN THE NATO SPECIAL PARTICIPANTS LIKE TURKEY WOULD HAVE TO BECOME DIRECT PARTICIPANTS AND REDUCE THEIR MANPOWER TOO.

M. KHLESTOV INSISTED THAT THE EASTERN PROPOSAL WAS JUST WHAT IT IS PROFESSED TO BE, A MEASURE TO MEET FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED DESIRES OF THE FLANKS TO AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH THE LEVEL OF CONCENTRATION OF FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE WAS REDUCED, BUT AT THE RISK OF INCREASING THE LEVEL OF SOVIET FORCES IN OTHER AREA; FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE TURKISH BORDER.

3. THE IMPRESSION CREATED BY THESE COMMENTS FROM KHLESTOV WAS THAT THIS PORTION OF THE NEW SOVIET PROPSAL HAS BEEN MADE MAINLY FOR EFFECT AND AS OSTENSIBLE EASTERN COMPLIANCE WITH WESTERN DESIRES. THE MEASURE HE PROPOSES IS ONE WITH WHICH THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS WOULD HAVE TO COMPLY GIVEN CONSIDERATIONS OF PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY OPINION WHILE THERE WOULD BE NO SUCH SANCTION ON THE SOVIETS. IT
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DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE BASIS OF WHAT KHLESTOV HAS SAID THUS FAR THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ANY SERIOUS INTENTION OF EXTENDING THE SCOPE OF LIMITATIONS TO COVER HOME TERRITORIES. EVEN IF THEY DID, OF COURSE, THE RESULT WOULD BE UNFAVORABLE TO THE WEST, GIVEN SOVIET SUPERIORITY IN NUMBERS OF MEN AND UNITS. RESOR

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